



# Department of Justice

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## **HOGSETT ANNOUNCES NOBLESVILLE MAN CHARGED WITH DISTRIBUTING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY**

*U.S. Attorney announces federal charges as part of ongoing Project Safe Childhood initiative*

### **PRESS RELEASE**

INDIANAPOLIS – Joseph H. Hogsett, the United States Attorney, announced today that Samuel Barnette, age 42, of Noblesville, has been charged by federal criminal complaint with distributing child pornography as part of the U.S. Attorney’s ongoing Project Safe Childhood initiative.

“The mission of our Project Safe Childhood initiative is to investigate and prosecute anyone found to engaged in the sexual exploitation of children,” Hogsett said. “Working together with our local partners, we’re dedicated to prosecuting the perpetrators of these disturbing crimes to the fullest extent of the law.”

According to the criminal complaint, a witness came forward on August 14, 2012, reporting to the Noblesville Police Department that while the witness had been in the residence of Barnette, she had allegedly observed a computer search history on the defendant’s computer that included search terms such as “naked kids” and “naked children.”

As a result of these interviews, a search warrant was sought and obtained by Noblesville law enforcement. The complaint alleges that in subsequent interviews with the Noblesville Police Department, Barnette admitted to having received child pornography involving children from ages two (2) years-old to eighteen (18) years-old via email. He also allegedly stated that he had used online search engines to seek out images of nude children.

The complaint further alleges that upon searching one of Barnette’s numerous email accounts, law enforcement were able to identify a number of images and videos that depict the sexual abuse of children, many of which were violent in nature. Media reports from the time of

Barnette's initial arrest on state charges indicate that up until the time of this investigation, he was employed at a local elementary school as a custodial worker.

"This individual reportedly worked around children as an elementary school custodian, all while allegedly seeking and collecting child pornography online," said Gary Hartwig, special agent in charge of Homeland Security Investigation – Chicago. "I urge child predators to take note – Homeland Security Investigations will find you and see that you are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law."

This case was the result of an investigation by U. S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Hamilton County Metro Child Exploitation Task Force, Carmel Police Department, the Noblesville Police Department, as well as other state and local partners, and was brought as part of the U.S. Attorney's Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney A. Brant Cook, who is prosecuting the case for the government, Barnette could face up to 20 years in prison if he is found to be guilty of distributing child pornography, as well as a \$250,000 fine and lifetime supervised release.

Led by United States Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more on Project Safe Childhood, visit [www.projectsafechildhood.gov](http://www.projectsafechildhood.gov)

A criminal complaint is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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